THE

Kings Majesty's

DECLARATION

To His Subjects,

Concerning Lawful

SPORTS

To be Used.

Imprinted at *London* by *Robert Barker*, Printer to the Kings most Excellent Majesty: And by the Assigns of *John Bill*, in the Year 1633. Reprinted in the Year 1686. And now again Reprinted in the Year 1722.

Price Two-Pence.

BY THE KING.

OUR dear Father of bleſſed Memory, in his return from Scotland, comming through Lancaſhire, found that his Subjects were debarred from Lawful Recreations upon Sundays after Evening-Prayers ended, and upon Holy-Days: And he prudently conſidered, that if theſe Times were taken from them, the meaner ſort who Labour hard all the

Week, ſhould have no Recreat-ions at all to refreſh their Spirits. And after his return, he farther ſaw that his Loyal Subjects in all other Parts of his Kingdom did ſuffer in the ſame kind, though perhaps not in the ſame degree: And did therefore in his Princely wiſ-dom, Publiſh a Declaration to all his loving Subjects, concern-ing lawful Sports to be uſed at ſuch times, which was Printed and Publiſhed by his Royal Commandment in the Year 1618. In the Tenor which hereafter followeth.

By

BY THE

KING.

WHereas, upon our return the laſt Year out of *Scotland*, we did publiſh our Pleaſure touching the Recreations of our People in thoſe parts, under our Hand: For ſome cauſes Us thereunto moving, we have thought good to command theſe our Directions then given in *Lancaſhire*, with a few words thereunto added, and moſt applicable to theſe

parts of our Realms, to be Publiſh'd to all our Subjects.

Whereas we did juſtly, in our Progreſs through *Lancaſhire*, rebuke ſome Puritanes and preciſe People, and took order that the like unlawfull Carriage ſhould not be uſed by any of them hereafter, in the Prohibiting, and unlawful Puniſhing of our good People, for uſing their lawful Recreations, and honeſt Exerciſes upon Sundays, and other Holydays, after the Afternoon Sermon or Service: We now find that two ſorts of People, wherewith that County is much infected, (We mean Papiſts and Puritans) have Maliciouſly traduced and calumniated thoſe our juſt and honourable

honourable Proceedings. And therefore leaſt our Reputation might upon the one ſide, (though innocently) have ſome aſperſion laid upon it, and that, upon the other part, our good People in that Country be miſled by the miſtaking, and miſinterpretation of our meaning: We have therefore thought good hereby to clear, and make our pleaſure to be manifeſted to all our good People in thoſe Parts;

It is true, that at our firſt entry to this Crown, and Kingdom, we were inform'd, and that too truly, that our County of *Lancaſhire* abounded more in Popiſh Recuſants than any County of *England*, and thus hath ſtill continued

ſince,

ſince, to our great regreet, with little amendment, ſave that now of late, in our laſt riding through our ſaid County, we find, both by the report of the Judges, and of the Biſhop of that Dioceſs, that there is ſome amendment now daily beginning, which is no ſmall contentment to Us.

The report of this growing Amendment amongſt them, made Us the more ſorry, when with our own Ears we heard the general complaint of our People, that they were barred from all lawful Recreation, and exerciſe upon the Sundays Afternoon, after the ending of all Divine Service, which cannot but produce two Evil: The one, the hindring of

the Converſion of many, whom the Prieſts would take occaſion hereby to vex, perſwading them that no honeſt Mirth or Recreation is lawful or tolerable in our Religion, which cannot but breed a great diſcontent in our Peoples Hearts, eſpecially of ſuch as are peradventure upon the point of turning; the other inconvenience is, that this Prohibition barreth the common and meaner ſort of People from uſing ſuch Exerciſes as may make their Bodies more able for War, when we, or our Succeſſours ſhall have occaſion to uſe them. And in place thereof, ſets up filthy Tipplings and Drunkenneſs, and breeds a number of idle and diſcon-

ted

ted Speeches in their Ale-houſes. For when ſhall the common People have leave to Exerciſe, if not upon the Sundays and Holidays, ſeeing they muſt apply their Labour, and win their living in all Working-Days,

Our expreſs Pleaſure therefore is, That the Laws of our Kingdom, and Canons of our Church be as well obſerved in that County, as in all other places of this our Kingdom. And on the other part, That no lawful Recreation ſhall be barred to our good People, which ſhall not tend to the breach of our aforeſaid Laws, and Canons of our Church; Which to expreſs more particularly, our

Pleaſure

pleaſure is, That the Biſhop, and all other inferiour Church-men, and Church-wardens, ſhall for their parts be careful and diligent, both to inſtruct the Ignorant, and convince and reform them that are Miſled in Religion, preſenting them that will not conform themſelves, but obſtinately ſtand out, to our Judge and Juſtices: Whom we likewiſe command to put the Law in due Execution againſt them.

Our pleaſure likewiſe is, That the Biſhop of that Dioceſs take the like ſtraight order with all the *Puritans* and *Preciſians* within the ſame, either conſtraining them to conform themſelves, or to leave the County according to the

Laws of our Kingdom, and Canons of our Church, and ſo to ſtrike equally on both hands, againſt the Contemners of our Authority, and adverſaries of our Church. And as for our good Peoples Lawful Recreation, our pleaſure likewiſe is, That after the end of Divine Service, our good People be not diſturbed, letted, or diſcouraged from any lawful Recreation, ſuch as Dancing, either Men or Women, Archery for Men, Leaping, Vaulting, or any other ſuch harmleſs Recreation, nor from having of May-Games, Whitſon Ales, and Morris-Dances, and the ſetting up of May-Poles, and other Sports therewith uſed, ſo as the ſame be had

had in due and convenient Time, without impediment or neglect of Divine Service; And that Women ſhall have leave to carry Ruſhes to the Church for the Decoring of it, according to their old Cuſtom. But with all, we do here account ſtill as Prohibited, all unlawful Games to be uſed upon Sundays only, as Bear and Bull baiting, Interludes, and at all times in the meaner ſort of People by Law prohibited, Bowling.

And likewiſe we barr from this Benefit and Liberty, all ſuch known Recuſants, either Men or Women, as will abſtain from coming to Church or Divine Service, being therefore unworthy of any lawful

Recreation after the ſaid Service, that will not firſt come to the Church, and ſerve *God*: Prohibiting in the like ſort the ſaid Recreations to any that, though conform in Religion, are not preſent in the Church at the Service of *God*, before their going to the ſaid Recreations. Our pleaſure likewiſe is, That they to whom it belongeth in Office, ſhall preſent, and ſharply Puniſh all ſuch as in abuſe of this our Liberty, will uſe theſe Exerciſes before the ends of all Divine Services for that Day. And we likewiſe ſtraightly command, that every Perſon ſhall reſort to his own Pariſh Church to here Divine Service, and each Pariſh by it ſelf to uſe the ſaid Recreation

creation after Divine Service. Prohibiting likewiſe any Offenſive Weapons to be carried or uſed in the ſaid times of Recreations. And our pleaſure is, That this our Declaration ſhall be publiſhed by order from the Biſhop of the Dioceſs, through all the Pariſh Churches, and that both our Judges of our Circuit, and our Juſtices of our Peace be informed thereof.

Given at our Mannour of Greenwich, *the four and twentieth Day of* May, *in the Sixteenth Year of our Reign of* England, France *and* Ireland, *and of* Scotland *the One and Fiftieth.*

Now

NOW out of a like pious Care for the Service of God, and for ſuppreſſing of any Humours that oppoſe Truth, and for the Eaſe, Comfort, and Recreation of our well deſerving People, we do ratifie and Publiſh this our Bleſſed Fathers Declaration: The rather becauſe of late in ſome Counties of our Kingdom, we find that under pretences of taking away Abuſes, there have been a general forbidding, not only of ordinary Meetings, but of the Feaſts of the Dedication of the Churches, commonly called Wakes. Now our expreſs will and pleaſure is, that theſe Feaſts, with others, ſhall be obſerved, and that our Juſtices of the Peace in their ſeveral Diviſions ſhall look to it, both

both that all Diſorders there, may be prevented or puniſhed, and that all Neighbourhood and Freedom, with Manlike and Lawful Exercize be uſed. And we farther Command our Juſtices of Aſſiſes in their ſeveeal Circuits, to ſee that no Man do trouble or moleſt any of our Loyal and Dutiful People, in or for their lawful Recreations, having firſt done their Duty to God, and continuing in Obedience to us and our Laws. And of this we command all our Judges, Juſtices of the Peace, as well within Liberties as without, Mayors, Bayliffs, Conſtables, and other Officers, to take notice of, and to ſee obſerved, as they tender our Diſpleaſure. And we farther will,

that

that Publication of this our Command be made by order from the Biſhops through all the Pariſh Churches of their ſeveral Dioceſs reſpectively.

Given at our Palace of *Weſtminſter* the Eighteenth Day of *October*, in the Ninth Year of our Reign.

God ſave the King.